

# Literacy skills for HSC English

Knox Grammar School  
Karen Yager



*'I hear and I forget; I see and I  
remember; I write and I understand.'*

## Vocabulary

**Verbs:** Elevate the style of your writing through the verbs!

conveys	proffers	ascribes	promulgates	evinces
represents	advances	affirms	validates	opines
posits	substantiates	challenges	confirms	predicates
expounds	clarifies	amplifies	espouses	enlightens

**Connectives:** Create cohesion through connectors!

In contrast	alternatively	furthermore	moreover
Is analogous	In comparison	similarly	correspondingly
conversely	nevertheless	additionally	

## Syntax – sentence structure

Simple sentence	Basic elements of a sentence - a subject, a verb, and an object. E.g. <i>'You will always be in the dark.'</i>
Compound sentence	A sentence made up of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a coordinating conjunction, such as 'but', 'and', 'or', 'yet', 'so', 'for' - E.g. <i>'The tiny interior of the shop was in fact uncomfortably full, but there was almost nothing in it of the slightest value.'</i>
Complex sentence	A sentence made up of an independent clause and one or more <b>dependent clauses</b> connected to it. A dependent clause is similar to an independent clause, or complete sentence, but it lacks one of the elements that would make it a complete sentence. E.g. <i>'He was going to buy some beer when the old man suddenly</i>

	<i>got up.</i> Common subordinating conjunctions: 'after', 'although', 'as', 'because', 'before', 'even though', 'if', 'since', 'though', 'unless', 'until', 'when', 'whenever', 'whereas', 'wherever', 'while'
Declarative sentence	Makes a statement - E.g. <i>'We are the dead!'</i>
Truncated or fractured sentence	An incomplete sentence – E.g. <i>'Of all the horrors in the world – a rat!'</i>
Exclamatory sentence	Expresses a strong feeling –E.g. <i>'I am correct!'</i>
Rhetorical question	A question that is designed to provoke thought rather than require an answer.
Imperative sentence	Gives a command. The sentence begins with a verb. E.g. <i>'Do your work!'</i>

Anastrophe	An inversion of the normal word order, where elements of a sentence are completely back to front from convention
Disjunction	Beginning a sentence with 'yet' or 'but' to shift the mood or provoke thought by dramatically disrupting the sentence
Hyperbaton	Words placed in a sentence in an unconventional order
Ellipsis	A dramatic pause or suggesting that there is more that has been left unsaid ...
Anaphora	Repetition of a word at the start of more than one sentence
Anadiplosis	Repetition of a word at the end of more than one sentence
Polysyndeton	Repetition of a conjunction or connecting word such as 'and' to join a series of sentences
Epizeuxis	The repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis

## Board of Studies glossary

The following verbs are common to the rubric in all HSC English exams.

describe	Paper 1 AOS Section 1/3	To provide examples from the texts for Discovery
explain	Paper 1 AOS Section 1/3	To state what is said about Discovery
analyse	Paper 1 AOS Section 1/3	To explain how and why Discovery is represented
express	Paper 1 AOS Section 2	To convey original ideas about Discovery
evaluate	Paper 2 MOD A, B & C ADV	To estimate the worth of a text in a range of contexts and to justify that estimation and its process
understand	Paper 2 MOD A, B & C STAND	To discuss the main ideas, form, structure and features of texts

## Key terms in English

The following terms are featured in the AOS and the Modules.

perceptions	Paper 1 AOS Section 1 Paper 2 MOD A STAND	The ways our perspectives, ideas, memories and senses shape we see the world and others.
representation	Paper 1 AOS Section 3 Paper 2 MOD C ADV	The ways ideas are portrayed through texts.
distinctive	Paper 2 MOD A & B STAND	A text's unique features
context	Paper 1 AOS Section 3 Paper 2 MOD C STAND Paper 2 MOD A ADV	The personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace conditions in

		which a text is responded to and composed
assumptions	Paper 1 AOS Section 1/3	Preconceived beliefs and ideas
perspective	Paper 1 AOS Section 1/3 Paper 2 MOD C ADV	Ways of seeing and evaluating the world and others based on experiences, attitudes and beliefs
values	Paper 2 MOD A ADV Extension 1 English	Core beliefs of society and individuals
medium/media of production	Paper 1 AOS Section 1/3 Paper 2 MOD C ADV	The form and its distinctive features
construction	Paper 2 MOD B ADV	The deliberate crafting of a text based on purpose
textual integrity	Paper 2 MOD B ADV	The unity of a text - coherent use of form, ideas & language

## Analysing texts in the AOS Paper 1

Key points to remember:

Ask what the text is saying about the human experience to discover the overarching concept of Discovery.

Begin analytical sentences with the meaning being conveyed first and then follow with the language or visual technique and the example.

Find the emotive words or salient images first to uncover the meaning, the tone and the concept related to Discovery.

**IDENTIFY** language feature, **EXEMPLIFY**, **EXPLAIN** and **EXTRAPOLATE** by discussing the meaning conveyed by the textual details about Discovery and what impact it has on the responder.

Make sure you know the features of various forms of text so that you can comment on how the form of the text reflects the concept of Discovery.

## Key visual terms

composition	What is included in a visual is usually deliberately placed there or included or omitted deliberately.
framing	Angles: tilted up or down, canted (tilted on axis)
rule of thirds	An object in the top third is usually empowered whereas anything in the bottom third is disempowered. Can be subverted.
vectors	The line that our eyes take when we look at a visual. Composers deliberately direct our reading path.
salience	The part that your eyes are first drawn to in the visual – visual weighting. Colour, image and layout determine what the salient image is in a visual.
body language/gaze	Examine facial expressions, gestures, stance or position. Take note of the direction of the subject's eyes.



# Representation

- How meaning is conveyed through language features, form and structure.
- The deliberate choices made by composers when they construct a text.
- These choices are shaped by the composer's perspective, purpose and assumptions.
- Their context – social, historical, cultural and personal – is influential.

## **The last question in the AOS Paper 1 Reading Task**

Key points to remember:

You need to write comprehensively (a page at the very minimum – two pages desirable), and discuss the form and features of the texts supported by detailed textual references. It is like a mini-synthesis essay!

1. In the first sentence or two introduce your thesis that is connected to the overarching concept related to Discovery explored by the text/s.
2. Then launch into an analysis of the first text or if there is only one the form of the text. Focus on the ideas first and then the language features that conveyed the meaning. You do not need lengthy quotes.
3. If you are asked to analyse more than one text compare and contrast the texts in relation to how they approach the concept of Discovery.
4. End with an evaluative statement that links back to your thesis.

## **AOS Paper 1: The imaginative response**

- Plan your structure: the opening and the conclusion – a circular or elliptical structure can cure a failure to produce a strong conclusion!
- Show don't tell. Focus on appealing to the senses through imagery.
- Listen to the sound and rhythm of your language.
- Verbs are the muscles of writing.
- Employ a variety of sentence beginnings and sentence lengths.
- Vary paragraph lengths!
- Use a range of poetic devices. Evocative imagery can lift a response into a higher band!
- Provide the backstory of a character in a few simple words or sentences.
- Create tension and contrast. Discovery is never static!
- Perfect the art of the first and last lines!

## Imaginative response structure

Linear	Sequential telling of the story.
Cyclical or elliptical	Starts and ends in the same place but the ending suggests that there is an epiphany or realisation. The start and ending mirror each other.
Flash back	Moves between the present and the past. Could be from more than one perspective.
Fragment	A moment in time in a narrative, such as the moment that self-discovery occurs.
Parallel	Two story threads running at the same time in your response from different perspectives. The stories usually merge or connect at the end to make a unified narrative.
<i>In Media Res</i>	Starting your response in the middle action.

## The extended response in AOS and the modules

- High-range responses use the key terms of the question to create a thesis.
- In the introduction present the thesis in response to the question and then provide two key reasons or ideas to support your thesis.
- The two key ideas or mini-thesis statements shape the body of the essay. 1st half – idea 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> half – idea 2.
- Each topic sentence should build your argument and connect to the ideas. Link to sentence in previous paragraph for cohesion.
- Use connecting words and impressive verbs!
- Use your prescribed text/s and/or texts of own choosing to support or challenge your thesis or concept.
- Focus on how a text shapes meaning; therefore, discuss and compare **HOW** this is done in all of the texts.
- Choose substantive related texts and your textual details wisely.

## Key language terms

<b>Sound devices</b>	
Alliteration	Repetition of consonants at the start of words
Consonance	Repetition of consonants throughout a sentence or phrase
Assonance	Repetition of vowels in a series of words
Sibilance	Repetition of the 's' sound
Onomatopoeia	The word echoes the sound it represents
Fricative sounds	Soft and gentle consonants, such as 'l' and 'f' and long vowel sounds
Plosive sounds	Harsh sounds that demand attention such as 'p' or 'b' or 'k'
<b>Imagery</b>	
Visceral imagery	We can see what is being described – painterly

Auditory imagery	We can hear what is being described
Olfactory imagery	We can smell what is being described
Gustatory imagery	We can taste what is being described
Metaphor	Comparison where one thing becomes the other
Simile	Comparison between two objects using 'like' or 'as'
Personification	Ascribing human qualities to a non-human
Metonymy	
Apostrophe	A dead person or object is addressed as if it is a person
Zoomorphism	Humans are given animal qualities or features
Anthropomorphism	Animals are given human qualities
Symbolism	When an object represents something conceptually
Pathetic fallacy	Feelings reflected in nature

Synecdoche	Part of an object stands for a whole
Motif	Recurrent image or symbol
<b>Dramatic effect</b>	
Hyperbole	Exaggeration
Meiosis	Understatement
Verbal irony	Saying something but intending to mean the opposite
Juxtaposition	Placing two things together for the purpose of developing comparisons and contrasts
Parody	Conscious imitation for dramatic purpose
Oxymoron	Combination of contradictory words for dramatic effect
Accumulation	Listing of things to make a point or build an image